

OBEY ATTENDS MEDFORD DENTAL CLINIC'S GRAND OPENING

MEDFORD, WI – Seventh District Congressman Dave Obey (D-WI) was in Medford today to participate in the grand opening of the new Marshfield Clinic Medford Dental Center. Obey secured \$380,000 in federal funds to help equip the new clinic and, as Chairman of the House Appropriations Committee, has long fought for increased funding nationwide for Community Health Centers and dental care.

“We’re facing a ‘silent epidemic’ of oral disease in this country because of a lack of available dental care, especially in rural areas and for the most vulnerable among us. Children have died because of infections brought on by the absence of dental services,” said Obey. “That’s why we’ve made improving access to dental care a priority, and why dental clinics, like this one, are so important. They help provide affordable dental care to thousands of Wisconsin families who would otherwise find it difficult or impossible to reach a dentist they could afford.”

According to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, for every American without medical insurance, three lack dental insurance, and there are 47 million Americans without health insurance today, Obey pointed out. In Wisconsin, he added, a recent study found that at least 20,000 visits a year to the emergency room are for dental conditions that could have been prevented by a visit to the dentist.

The new Medford clinic is located at 843 West Broadway Street. With five dentists, five hygienists, and twenty-five support staff, the clinic anticipates providing comprehensive preventive and restorative dental services to approximately 6,000 patients a year.

Marshfield Clinic operates dental centers for Family Health Center in Chippewa Falls, Ladysmith, Owen and Park Falls and recently broke ground for a dental center in Neillsville. These centers have provided dental care to people from 65 of Wisconsin's 72 counties regardless of insurance status or ability to pay. A sliding fee scale assists families with limited income and no insurance.

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